Info@starklawlibrary.org

The email address, info@starklaw library.org really works! TRY IT!!

Special points of interest:

- 36% of British Internet users spend more than two hours online per session looking for specific, accurate information

- The point at which the user becomes frustrated with an unsuccessful search averages just 12 minutes

- Many search engines allow you to enter a regular question into their search engine boxes.

BEGINNERS   Natural Language Searching

For the last four months we have been working with different ways to access specific bits of information from the vast amount that resides on the Web. By this time you may be feeling a bit overwhelmed by these diverse methods. You're not alone! Before we get into our main topic, let's find out what causes computer frustration and what we can do about it!

"First came road rage... Given where people are spending more and more of their time nowadays, it's no surprise that Internet rage has entered the lives of the stressed and hurried masses." "The study found that 36 percent of British Internet users spend more than two hours online per session looking for specific, accurate information. And the user boiling point -- at which the user becomes frustrated with an unsuccessful search -- averages just 12 minutes." [1]

This survey also indicated that up to 71% of the users have experienced Internet rage at some time, and listed the causes as:

- too much information
- the excessive time it takes to sort through it all and find the information you really want
- search results that are often full of links to useless information, advertising banners, and promotions, not the desired information [2]

Arlene F. Harder, Executive Director of CancerOnline has written an excellent page, "Reducing Online Frustration" at: <http://www.canceronline.org/info/basic/internet/frustration.htm> will help you reduce nine common causes of frustration.

Another article, "Safety Tips For The Computer" at <http://www.abbyandme.com/articles/pagemaker.cgi?989947191.txt> offers five guidelines to follow for your good health at the computer and five for your computer's health and well-being.

Something that may help you conquer Internet rage is this month's topic "natural language searching."

Many search engines allow you to forget about confusing symbols and picking the right search term(s) and instead enter a regular question into their search engine boxes.

Four engines were reported as supporting natural language searches; **Albert** <http://www.albert.com/cgi-bin/searchweben/albSearcher>, **Alta Vista** <http://www.altavista.com/>, **Ask Jeeves** <http://www.askjeeves.com/>, and the meta-engine, **One2seek** <http://www.one2seek.com>. But many regular search engines perform pretty well when given a natural language question.

INTERMEDIATE   The Invisible Web: A Year Later

In March of last year I did a review of the Invisible Web in this column. A lot has changed in the past ten months! Last month the Beginner section of "info@starklawlibrary.org" concluded with a paragraph about the Invisible web resource, The Invisible-Web.net at: <http://www.invisible-web.net> which is a very good directory of invisible information.

What else has risen to the surface of the Web in the last few months? An article at Searchengine-watch.com, "Google Unveils More of the Invisible Web " at <http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/01/sd1031-google-files.html> gives some of the advances made by Google.

- Last January Google began indexing Adobe Acrobat documents using the .pdf suffix, but they now also index PowerPoint presentations (.ppt), Word documents (.doc) Excel spreadsheets (.xls), Adobe Postscript documents (.ps), Rich Text Format documents (.rtf) [4] Adobe PostScript (.ps), Lotus 1-2-3 (.wk1, .wk2, .wk3, wk4, .wk5,. wki, .wks, .wku), Lotus WordPro (.lwp), MacWrite (.mw), Microsoft Works (.wks, .wps, .wdb), Microsoft Write (.wri), Text (.ans, .txt) [5]

- Other additions include Google Catalog Search of mail-order catalogs online, Apple Macintosh, BSD Unix, Linux, U.S. Government (Search all .gov and .mil sites), and Universities (Stanford, Brown, BYU, & more).

The best way to find information in the new document formats is to use Google's "filetype" operator.

For example use:
- "zamboni" filetype:doc
- "2000 census" filetype:xls, or
- "investment strategy" filetype:ppt [6]

There is a lot of good and up-to-date information in "Those Dark Hiding Places: The Invisible Web Revealed" by Robert J. Lackie at: <http://library.rider.edu/scholarly/rlackie/Invisible/Inv_Web.html>

- He recommends the following directories:
Librarians' Index to the Internet <http://lii.org/> **FindLaw** <http://www.findlaw.com/> **InfoMine** <http://infomine.ucr.edu> **About.com** <http://www.about.com/>
- He recommends these databases:
Direct Search <http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~gprice/direct.htm> **Invisible-web.com** <http://www.invisibleweb.com> **CompletePlanet** <http://www.completeplanet.com/>
- And the following search engines:
Moreover <http://w.moreover.com/> **FAST Multimedia Search** <http://multimedia.alltheweb.com/> **Search PDF** <http://searchpdf.adobe.com> **Google** <http://www.google.com/> [7]

The Internet Legal Research Weekly adds **Cornell U**, <http://www.law.cornell.edu>, **Jurist** <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/subj_gd.htm>, and **Resource Discovery Network**, <http://www.rdn.ac.uk> [8]

I will also recommend that you buy "The Invisible Web: Uncovering Information Sources Search Engines Can't See." Written by Chris Sherman, with co-author Gary Price, it is 439 pages of great information!

ADVANCED PDA's

If you got a PDA as a Christmas present, are thinking about getting one, or just know what the initials stand for, then this column is for you!

First of all, PDA is:

"short for *personal digital assistant,* a handheld device that combines computing, telephone/fax, and networking features. A typical PDA can function as a cellular phone, fax sender, and personal organizer." [9]

If you just finished reading your Users' Manual (yea, right) and know what your new toy can do already, you may want to head over to PDACity at: <http://www.pdacity. com/default.asp> and check out the links available for your model and some of the freeware, shareware and demo downloads that are available. Be careful here, some of the downloads would NOT be rated PG!!

Some are nice additions. Easy-Lock allows you the security of using a password without having to enter it each time you want to use your PDA. All you have to do is press a certain button (that you have previously chosen) and your "on." PrintMe at: <https://www.printme.com/> allows you to easily print from your PDA. [10]

If you don't know what a PDA can do, here's the low-down:

"A typical PDA can function as a personal organizer, reference guide, and database tool. Unlike portable computers, most PDAs are pen-based, using a stylus rather than a keyboard for input. There are two different types of handheld digital organizers: PDAs and Handhelds. PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants) provide basic record-keeping tools (date book, personal schedule, to-do list, etc.) and are typically smaller than handhelds. Handhelds are more expensive than PDAs and provide more computing options (software such as word processing, spreadsheets, and web access) in addition to basic organizing tools." [11]

If you are thinking about buying one, CNET Buying Adviser has a good article, "Find The Right Handheld For What You Want To Do" <http:// computers.cnet.com/hardware/0-5043347-7-6163347.html> that describes the major types of PDA's, advises you on what to look for and recommends good buys in each category. Another source of good information is ZDNet at: <http://www.zdnet. com/>. Enter [PDA] into the search engine, make sure it is set to All ZDNet, then scroll down to the News and Opinion, AnchorDesk and Downloads sections. The PDABuyers-Guide at <http://www.pdabuyersguide. com/> also offers information on different models in their PDA Reviews section, they have software links, a section on "Tips and Hints" and even a discussion forum!

Speaking of forums, try PDA Forum at: <http://www.pdaforums. com/> to see what people actually say about the product you are considering!

If you liked the voice recognition software from last month's article, you will be pleased to know that you can have it on your PDA too. See Lisa Guernsey's October 11th article in the NY Times, "Researchers Bring Voice Recognition to Palmtops" located on the Web at: <http://www.nytimes. com/2001/10/11/technology/ circuits/11VOIC.html>. [12]

Special points of interest:

- At PDACity you will find links for your PDA model plus some shareware and demo downloads that are available.

- Two websites describe the major types of PDA's, advise you on what to look for and recommend good buys in each category.

- You can even get voice recognition software for your PDA.

BEGINNERS   Natural Language Searching (Continued)

To test how they performed, I posed three questions to many of the major search engines. The questions were:

1. How does a natural language search engine work?
2. What does FOIA stand for?
3. When is Rod Stewart's birthday?

Albert, Ask Jeeves and **One2seek** found the answers in less than two minutes, but **AltaVista** had trouble with the last question. Several of the sites looked VERY promising, but it took over five minutes to actually find the answer! Ask Jeeves is the most popular of the natural language engines and is the 16th most visited site on the Web according to Nielsen Net Ratings. [3]

All of the natural-specific engines did a very good job finding information on general questions, but try to stay away from very specific questions.

AOL Search <http://search.aol.com/> and **Looksmart** <http://www.looksmart.com/> performed the best when given a natural language question, answering all three questions in less than three minutes each. **Alltheweb** <http://alltheweb.com/> **Direct Hit** <http://www.directhit.com/>, **Google** <http://www.google.com>, **iWon** <http://home.iwon.com/index_gen.html>, **Lycos** <http://www.lycos.com/> and **Yahoo!** <http://www.yahoo.com/> were able to answer two out of three of the questions within five minutes.

Another interesting and entertaining comparison of natural language searching is Tara Calishain's "ResearchBuzz Articles: Natural Language Searching" at: <http://www.researchbuzz.com/articles/natlang.html>.

FOOTNOTES

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[4] Tyburski, Genie. "Research News: TVC Alert, 1 Nov 2001." The Virtual Chase. 1 Nov 2001. Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll. 9 Jan 2002. <http://www.virtualchase.com/TVCAlert/nov01/1nov01.html>

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